

THE GREEN CALDRON

A MAGAZINE OF FRESHMAN WRITING

CHICAGO



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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Scandal

MICHAEL TEPPER

Rhetoric 102, Theme 11

The following items are from the wires of the National Press Service:

BULLETIN

WASHINGTON (NPS) The Senate announced on Thursday that it intends to start investigation of a reported clock-setting conspiracy sometime next week. This announcement comes on the heels of rumors that the public clocks in many major cities of the United States have been set back five minutes by merchants who hope the extra minutes of daylight will increase their business.

WASHINGTON (NPS) A top New York clock repairman testified before the Senate's "Time Fix" Committee, Wednesday, that he had been paid more than \$1,000 by a group of New York merchants to turn back a number of downtown clocks five minutes. Homer Wopsel, head of New York's Wopsel and Company, a clock repair firm, told the Senate committee that he had been contacted over a year ago by the president of a large department store who said he was acting as a spokesman for the New York retailers. Wopsel went on to say that he was given a cashier's check, drawn on an out-of-state bank, and instructed to turn back as many public clocks in the downtown area as he possibly could.

Wopsel testified further that when he asked the contact man what the purpose of the "fix" was, he was told, "It's like daylight saving time. The longer daylight is, the longer the housewife feels she has to shop. As a consequence, she buys more merchandise, and we make more money."

NEW YORK (NPS) A spokesman for the New York Chamber of Commerce said today, in a prepared statement, that charges made by Homer Wopsel before a Senate investigating committee yesterday were "Ridiculous." Wopsel claimed the city's merchants paid him to set back public clocks in a "time fix" in downtown New York.

"The retailers are here to serve the public," the spokesman said. "They are honest men, and any insinuation that they are trying to defraud the public is ridiculous and preposterous."

CHICAGO (NPS) Mr. A. R. Palmer, president of Marshall Field and Company, has refused to comment on reports that the famed "Field Clocks," on the corners of State and Randolph and State and Washington in Chicago, are mixed up in the "time fix" scandal.

The reports come as the Senate digs deeper in its investigation of the conspiracy to slow down public clocks by five minutes in order to increase retail business.

CHICAGO

By NPS writer, NORMAN BARRY

The streets of Chicago have been darkened. Avenues that were once brightly illuminated by the light from giant clocks on advertisements are now only moderately lit roads, and the clocks themselves are but dark shadows.

The Coca Cola sign on Michigan Avenue near the Loop no longer informs the weary shopper of the time of day. The light of the IBM clock on top of the International Business Machine Building no longer shines its message across Lake Michigan. Even the lights on the hands of the giant Motorola clock on Lake Shore Drive have been turned off, and the hands have been removed.

Advertisers hasten to remove their clocks in order to avoid censure by a public incensed by the Senate "time fix" investigations. So, one by one, the great clocks of the city are stopped, darkened, and torn down. An era in telling time has passed.

BULLETIN

WASHINGTON (NPS) The Senate announced, Friday, that it intends to start investigation of alleged contamination of popcorn in movie theaters sometime within the next few days.

Apathy on the Campus

CHESTER LASKOWSKI

Rhetoric 102, Theme 2

FACING THE PROSPECT OF GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL, I often thought of the years of college still ahead of me. At that time university life was as clear to me as a half-finished jigsaw puzzle. I knew it from the TV football games, from the Sunday magazine sections of Chicago newspapers, and from movies and hearsay. I fully expected to enter a world removed from that I had known. My idealized university was the spirit of the ancient and classic, not preserved but still living. It was the apostle of the ultimate in truth and knowledge, the nucleus of history's culture. It had long shaded walks and extensive lawns, old but distinctly preserved buildings like barbs on which time has been caught and held, and, most important of all, students oblivious of the honking, grinding, cheering society of today who, like me, were curious about things and ached to know all that they could. No one was of the small-minded class whose greatest interest and most profound thought went into the World Series; my idealized students cheered the team not for the sport but for the "Alma Mater," the "Orange and Blue," the "Halls of Ivy." I thought I knew college, but then I went there.

I found long walks, all right, walks from class to class through dirty, frame-housed streets, across puddle-specked parking lots, and along the stump-shaded

quadrangle, the only and soon-to-be-less extensive lawn on campus. Well, this was the least important piece in the puzzle. I became convinced that outward appearances were not meaningful to a real university. I would find my instructors and classmates to be the essence of the school.

My instructors have not disappointed me too much. Some, more than others, possess the peculiar traits, individualistic personality, and learned appearance that one expects. Some treat their classes with a belligerent tolerance as if vital research were being delayed; but this is good, the first bit of real collegiate initiation we come across. Others seem willing to communicate on higher levels, but are waiting for their pupils to express interest. It is the student, though, who is inadequate.

Aside from the small groups of foreign students, thwarted individuals, or shut-outs from society—the esoteric few who carry on the ideals of true university education—the student body is the same one that infests the high schools. It destroys the ideals and foundations of a college in its attitude. It carries with it the intrinsic vulgarities of the other society, blighting the campus which should stand above this. Each student is too involved in the trivialities inherited from his old life to take the interest he should in his studies. Gilbert Highet, in an essay called “The American Student as I See Him,” says metamorphosis will not take place until the student does graduate study. But why so late? Are not undergraduates mature enough, inquisitive enough to elevate the university to its proper status in learning? It seems a shame that the source of the world’s only hope for the future, its universities, should be affected so by the very society they’re hoping to educate.

Some students enter into difficult fields of study—engineering or architecture—but they study hard only because they must. They lack enthusiasm for knowledge itself. Their concern is “finding a vocation.” This is not a good reason to come to college. It is not so in Europe, where brighter pupils are encouraged to pursue more liberal studies. In America we find society-warped people filling college quotas for the selfish purpose of learning a vocation and returning to the warped society. The university, then, is not serving its purpose as the seat of learning. It is not leading the world, but being led.

The cause for the defects in our university system may be in our democratic ideology. Since we believe that those who want to go to college and who have at least average intelligence should go, we lack the power to weed out any but the very worst—even in the face of our increasing masses of students. Standards go down. We get quantity and not quality in education. The attack of the Dutch elm blight on campus trees seems to me almost an allegorical portent, the first step in the destruction of universities as we have known them. Outward beauty is gone at the University of Illinois. What will happen to its inner beauty?

The University of Illinois has an apathetic student body, one which on the whole lacks spirit, drive, and genuine interest in knowledge other than that which seems to have practical use; and, as a result, the university is not doing the job it should in producing leaders for our society.

The Bullfight

GEORGE M. HIGHSMITH

Rhetoric 101, Placement Exam

IN SPAIN, THE BULLFIGHT IS MORE THAN A SPORT: IT IS A part of the country's culture. The crises, the exciting moments in American sports, seem trivial compared to the Spanish contest between man and beast. In every bullfight, the matador faces death, pits his skill, strength, and knowledge against that of a bull whose only desire is to kill him.

Every Spanish bullfight fan is an aficionado; he can tell a dangerous pass from one which simply looks dangerous, and a good kill from a cowardly one. Most of the fans know about bullfighting from having tried it in an amateur fight. In fact, almost all Spanish boys have the desire to be a matador; and a great many try, some succeeding, others becoming banderillos or picadors, but most settling for a seat at as many bullfights as they can possibly attend. Because of their knowledge of the sport, the spectators are extremely critical, and a poor performance is always marked by the boos of the crowd and a barrage of seat cushions, wine bottles, and shoes. However, it is this same knowledge which makes the sport an impromptu art, a communication of emotion between matador and crowd.

The bullfight fan is like the American jazz fan who goes to hear the same group night after night, waiting for that one electrifying moment of the creative artist at his best; most of the time the music is mediocre, but when it's at its best, nothing else matters. And when the great matador, reaching his peak with a brave, strong bull, stands poised over those horns, hoping (but not knowing) that they won't come up and dig his very guts out, hoping that the sword doesn't hit a bone and break off in his hand, plunges his sword down into the back of the bull's neck and punctures the bull's lungs (he hopes), and when every man who ever saw an amateur bullfight or faced a bull or ran from one, knowing what it means to lean over a bull's horns and expose one's groin, holds his breath and, not saying a word, watches the matador in the hot, bright sun, on the white sand prove for the whole world to see his courage and strength and skill, sees him become one with the proud, noble, strong bull—this is the moment of truth.

So the bullfight is not a sport at all, but an art—not comparable to American baseball or American anything—the art of the matador who fights one day in Madrid, then sleeps in the back seat of a car filled with costumes, capes, sword, and manager's cigar smoke as it bounces over dirt roads, and despite T.B. or syphilis, or probably both, gets out of the car in time to eat, dress, and enter the arena to face two specially bred bulls in one afternoon, hoping to kill those bulls honorably, knowing that if he does, he will be a hero, and if he doesn't, he will be insulted verbally and physically.

Respect

KATHLEEN E. OSBORNE

Rhetoric 102, Theme 13

"I AM VERY SORRY, MISS CHAMBERLAIN, BUT I CAN'T TREAT you like (sic) a goddess. In America we respect our teachers, but they respect us too, and we're friends. I respect you and want to be friendly, but you don't respect me. You don't respect anybody but other teachers and adults. But you're not a queen, and I won't bow down to you."

Last year in England my sixteen-year-old sister, who is very forthright, lost her temper and said these words to her formroom mistress. Carol and I were baffled by the English attitude toward education and educators, and her outburst was in protest. My own feelings were in tacit sympathy with hers.

English children are taught almost from infancy that adults are superior beings and that teachers are superior adults. As a result, they regard all teachers with mingled respect and fear. American children are also taught to respect their teachers. It came as a surprise, then, to learn that the mistresses and my classmates thought me disrespectful, for I had been treating the mistresses with typical American respect. I came to the conclusion that the meaning of respect in Britain differs from its meaning in America.

I quickly learned the hundred and one rituals and abasements by which the English school child shows his respect. I rose when a mistress or an adult entered (and left) the classroom, said "Good Morning, Miss _____!" in unison with twenty or thirty other girls at the beginning of each class, allowed mistresses to precede me on the stairs and through doors which I held open for them, erased the blackboards, ran their senseless personal errands, prefaced all questions and remarks with "Please . . .," and disputed their opinions as little as possible. But I never will understand the subtle ramifications of the word *respect* as the English understand them.

It seems to me that the English respect an ideal. I went through the motions of respect without understanding the whys and wherefores. But I have my own interpretations of the word *respect*. Certainly I respected the mistresses there, but I respected them for themselves, not because they were teachers. In English schools I met two of the finest women I have ever known. I have great respect for Miss Stack, the headmistress of Oxford High School for Girls, for her vitality, for her great knowledge and understanding, for her sensibilities, and for her character. I respect Miss Jackson, the senior mathematics mistress, for her great teaching ability, for her friendliness, and for her individuality and independence. My friends respect them because they are dedicated women—all teachers are dedicated in England—and because "they know so much more than we, you know." But I sincerely like these women, whereas my friends dis-

like them. Miss Stack is "that narrow-minded old bigot" and Miss Jackson is "the Ogre." ("Watch out! She bites!")

The English idea of respect is often little more than a superficiality, a pseudo-respect. I resent kowtowing to an ideal, and I will not be intimidated by the idea of one person's superiority. I do not believe that any one person is basically superior to another, unless one is an idiot and the other a genius. Everyone has the same worth, as an individual, in my estimation. My attitude is at variance with the English attitude, but mine makes for a more sincere form of respect, a form engendered not by fear but by realization of the individual's special assets.

Laughter and Twain

DONALD LEE FOX

Rhetoric 101, Final Examination

WHAT IS LAUGHTER? IN ITS EXPRESSION IT CAN BE, ON THE one hand, simulated, contrived, and affected, and, on the other hand, it can be sincere, warm, cutting, or completely uncontrollable. Philosophers, dramatists, comedians, and many, many others have searched thousands of years for a common denominator and have yet to find it. Freud called it a reaction to incongruity, but this definition still falls short of an understanding of the essence of laughter. Neither do we understand the basic reality of the crackling force we call electricity, but we use it every day for an endless variety of purposes, from the stuttering animation of a creative riveting gun to a searing blast that disrupts atoms. And so it is (with one exception which will be gone into later) that we use laughter—with variety and skill, but with ignorance. One of laughter's most deft masters was Mark Twain.

Twain played upon the human funnybone with all the skill of an Albert Schweitzer at the organ, calling forth a splendid variety of responses, from a first agreeing nod through smiles, titters, chuckles, to a final full, delighted laugh. But underneath, we discern dark, brooding bass notes, for Twain's laughter—at least in his later work—was a device of destruction, designed to rip away the sequined tawdry with which we pretentiously clothe ourselves and to leave us naked. Let us look at a few examples from *Huckleberry Finn*.

The Duke and the King, both of whom bring much trouble into Huck's life for a good half of the novel, are characters who, wandering up and down the river, make their respective ways by hoodwinking everyone they meet. Indeed, upon first meeting, they attempt to convince each other, as well as Huck and Jim, of their nobility. Their moment of glory arrives when they manage to pull some pretty flimsy wool over the eyes of an entire community and almost get their hands on a considerable fortune.

In all these escapades, Twain needs only a little exaggeration, a little irony, to make us see his point: that people will not only fall for almost anything, but will really work hard to hold beliefs that will continually make fools of them. We read and laugh at these poor, misled fools and—if we are wise—we laugh at ourselves, feeling in their foolishness an echo of our own fallibility. Thus, Twain destroys a concept we have probably held most of our thinking lives, the concept of human rationality, our crowning glory.

He spares no one. The one person in town who sees through the two charlatans comments kindly that Huck has probably had little experience with lying, hardly a valid assessment of Huck's character. And Huck Finn himself is deceived in some situations. He is deceived by the sheer mass of his environment and unable to shed, or even question, some of its grossly false standards. He is unable to use his rationality to penetrate the unreal fantasies of Tom Sawyer, which Tom justifies by the authorities of double-talk and stubbornness.

Huck early sees through the Duke and the King, and he delivers a hilarious monologue to Jim, using a veritable hash of history to prove that all kings and dukes and all nobility are essentially rascals. Here Twain brings home the point that the subject is nearly always exploited by his ruler. Laughing at Huck's description of Henry VIII's marriage to Anne one evening and his decapitation of her before breakfast the next morning, we are amused at Huck's disregard for historical accuracy (revered by generations of scholars) and at the same time, we find ourselves wondering how people could ever have been fools enough to pay homage to the theory of "the divine right of kings."

A little later in the sequence, the Duke digs into his extensive theatrical knowledge and reconstructs Hamlet's soliloquy from memory. We watch him snorting and strutting through the scene, pacing the raft like a rabid mongrel, and hear what turns out to be an insanely funny hash of all the most-used lines from almost every play Shakespeare wrote. We laugh, but at the same time will we ever again be able to see Maurice Evans declaim this soliloquy in the "grand manner" without a momentary recall of Huck Finn's raft? Ashamed, however, we will probably throttle the Duke in our minds and assume the proper reverence.

In Twain's somewhat embittered hands, laughter is unfailingly equated with destruction. He tears down our temples, tips over our sacred images, and wanders blithely off to new territories, leaving us picking confusedly through the rubble for some fragment to hold onto.

Why doesn't Twain, the master of American humor, employ laughter in a constructive fashion? Was he so bitter, warped into sadism? Not at all; it was simply that Twain could not do the impossible. Laughter can destroy utterly, and it can even preserve to a certain extent, but it can never build.

The picture is not entirely without hope. It has been said that man laughs to preserve his sanity; this concept can take us far. With a laugh, we can only clear the rubble left in Twain's tortured wake and try, by other means, to build again something of simpler, greater, and more honest value.

First Impressions

HOWARD SIEGEL

Rhetoric 101, Theme 12

AFTER READING THE *ODYSSEY* OF HOMER, I WAS STRUCK by my failure to react with any genuine enthusiasm to such a highly acclaimed piece of literature, especially in view of the fact that I have always read quite a bit and have been able to get considerable pleasure and understanding from what I have read. Why, then, do I have this completely dispassionate reaction?

After giving it considerable thought, I came to the conclusion that, strangely enough, the very extent of my reading was detrimental to my ability to appreciate Homer. The validity of this conclusion was enhanced when I recalled my initial reaction to the music of Mozart and other classicists.

I first heard Mozart's work after being well indoctrinated in the music of the romantics and moderns. I have heard the passion of Tchaikowski and Rachmaninoff, the majesty of Beethoven, the color of Franck and Saint-Saëns, and the sensitivity of Debussy and Chopin. These elements had shaped my musical thinking in such a way that Mozart did not fit the mold. His themes sounded simple, his development uninteresting, and his music in general merely "pleasant."

In much the same way, the *Odyssey* seems to be a "nice story," containing nothing objectionable and nothing to arouse more than a passive reaction. I place the blame for this response on authors of more recent times. In every element, when compared to the works of later authors, the *Odyssey* seems as bland as institutional food. Homer's plots, though far-fetched and far reaching, do not excite the imagination as do those of Maugham or Hemingway. Odysseus's character, as defined by Homer, when compared to that of Salinger's Holden Caulfield, stimulates the reader about as much as melba toast or yogurt stimulates the gourmet. The exploration of ideology appears ridiculously shallow after one has read the political science fiction of George Orwell or Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment*. Homer's humor in comparison to George S. Kaufman's or James Thurber's is as pitiable a mismatch as Abbott and Costello opposing Charlie Chaplin. Homer displays none of the warmth of Saroyan, none of the insight of Chayevsky, and none of the allegory of Miller or Williams.

Yet, in spite of all the shortcomings I am forced to recognize Homer as perhaps the greatest writer of all times, greater, probably, than all those I personally prefer. In seeking a solution to this conflict, I must turn to music once again. I have come to love Mozart. Some of his seemingly childish expressions are so uncontaminated by sophistication (in the romantic or modern sense) that I find them refreshingly delightful and as enjoyable as any other

music I have heard. Through repeated listening, I have learned to respect his gentility and discipline. I can only hope that the analogy is consistent with respect to my appreciation of Homer, for if it is, I need only to increase my exposure to Homer, to discover new elements and standards, in order to have mastered another master.

"I Know Why..."

SALLY RONK

Rhetoric 101, Theme 10

AS I WAS LYING ON THE BED, READING THE LATEST MICKY Spillane thriller, I heard my roommate trying to establish communications with me.

"Sally," she said menacingly, "have you or have you not written that rhetoric theme?"

I ignored her. This one-sided conversation went on and on for quite some time. I still ignored her. Mike Hammer usually gets results by ignoring women. My roommate came at me with a broken beer bottle, screaming. I still ignored her. She came at me with two broken beer bottles and a sawed-off shot-gun in her garter.

"All right, Halligan," I said coolly, "what does all this mean?" "Now," she answered with passion, "I know why people flunk out of school."

I gathered up the dog-eared pages of my murder mystery, a pen to mark the wicked passages, and my coat. I was going out for the afternoon. It was Friday and very foggy.

"Do you know why people flunk out of school?" she called vehemently after me as I walked out of the room.

"The reasons why people flunk out of school are as different as the types of people themselves," I replied, and slammed the door.

I continued walking and slamming doors behind me until I found myself in the Natural History Museum, confronted with an exhibit labeled "Early American Indian Artifacts." It was very interesting. There was, among other things, a small pot filled with a dark gray powder. It had a sign leaning against it. The sign read "THE MEDICINE MEN OF THE ILLINI TRIBE (467 AD—1806 AD) BELIEVED THAT THIS POWDER ENDOWED MEN WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN NATURE." I glanced hastily around to look for a guard. There was no guard. I ate a small bit of the powder and left.

As I walked into the corridor I discovered two girls in deep conversation. "Gee," said one, "I'm really scared of that next zo exam. I mean, it has me . . ." Suddenly, I heard the following verse:

Emotional Emmy always clutches;
 At exams her mind's on crutches.
 Problems, troubles weigh her down;
 Easy courses make her frown.

I looked behind me. There was no one. Oh well, I thought, my mind must be playing tricks on me. Then I walked over to the Union. In the Tavern there was a group of girls drinking coffee. It was about 3:20 P.M.

Coffee Carol's of caffeine addicted;
 With her absence her class is afflicted.
 Over a steaming hot black cuppa,
 She speculates what the prof is upta.

Well, well, I thought, it must be the powder.

Leaving the Tavern and walking upstairs, I observed a young man whose arms were laden with folders, posters, and forms. Immediately the following assailed me:

Activities Al is busy, busy,
 Never over test or quizzie;
 Organizing campus particulars,
 Most of his hours are extra-curriculars.

This verse thing was beginning to become annoying.

I ran out of the Union past the row of sofas. A girl was snoozing over her books:

Sleepy Suzy never fails
 To fall asleep over Candide's travails.
 If you ask her why, she'll say,
 'I can study another day.'

I fled down the broadwalk. A boy who hardly ever comes to drama class waved at me as I sped by him.

Social Sam has lots of friends
 Knows the latest hot-rod trends.
 Crew-cut, crew-neck, as you see
 He doesn't want more than a gentleman's C."

This was getting ridiculous. I ran and ran. I ran into a car. It was Pete. He was going to pick me up for a TGIF date.

"Well, well," he said.

Party Pete is on the run
 Cutting classes, having fun.
 While to class he should be going,
 It's his wild oats he's sowing.

"You aren't going to sow any in *my* pasture," I cried before I could stop myself.

"What?"

"Oh, nothing. Where're we going?"

"Kam's."

As we walked into Kam's, I saw four girls playing cards.

Bridge Betty has the trumps
Then she wonders why she flunks.
Nine to five she sits at Kam's,
Thinking only of grand slams.

"Pete," I said. "Couldn't we go somewhere else?"

We went to Bidwell's. On the way we met Bob and Myrtle.

"How did that math exam go?" Pete asked Bob.

"Ah, better luck next . . ."

Rational Robert never frets.
A flunked exam? To him, no sweat.
A poor night's sleep or a lovers' quarrel:
'I can make it up tomorrel.'

Not only were the verses persisting, they were getting worse and worse.

"And how about you, Myrt?"

Misfit Myrtle'd think it peachier
If she could be a first-grade teacher
But parents want her to be a lawyer
So all she does is hem and hawyer.

"Please, Pete," I pleaded.

We saw Pete's fraternity brother Bill in Bidwell's.

Beer Bill lives at Biddy's
Gulping it down and cracking witties.
Doesn't know why his instructor said,
'You've got Schlitz-foam in the head.'

I rushed out the door and raced for the Museum. I ran headlong into Lena,
who was flirting with ten boys at one time.

Leap-year Lena's goal in life
Is to be somebody's wife.
Sees no reason why she should think:
'What good's Plato over a sink?'

The Museum was just closing. I got there too late, so I went down to the
women's room and cried.

"Great Spirit," I wailed, "revoke thy gift! For goodness-sake, take it back.
I'm sorry."

Lifting up my tear-stained face, I saw myself in the mirror:

Sally finds in procrastination
Something of great fascination . . .

I yelped and fainted.

When I regained consciousness, I hurried home and wrote my rhetoric theme.
This diminished my "gift" somewhat, and by the time I had completed two
weeks' over-due homework, it was completely gone.

Socialized Medicine

DAVID JOSEF NORTON

Rhetoric 101, Placement Exam

SOCIALIZED MEDICINE HAS TWO PRINCIPAL ADVANTAGES. The first and probably the more important of these is that, as its name implies, it is supported by the state. What this means, essentially, is that any subject of the state who is in need of medical care will receive it. The second advantage, which is closely related to the first, is that socialized medicine places all legal medical practitioners under the direct supervision and control of the state. This has a natural tendency to reduce and stabilize doctors' fees.

Since socialized medicine is supported by the state, the funds necessary for its support come initially and primarily from the taxpayer. This means that the average medical expenditure of each citizen will not be significantly reduced, but that those who are very poor (and those who need very costly care) will be able to have the care that they need, while those that are very rich or are in no need of medical care will tend to spend more on it, in the form of taxes, than they would if their medical organization were not socialized.

Essentially, then, socialized medicine involves taking from the rich to benefit the poor. This is not inconsistent with aspects of socialism already present in our society, but, despite a long record of sympathy for this process, perhaps initiated by Robin Hood and his Merrie Men who robbed the rich to give to the poor, it tends to be frowned upon by many people as a consequence of the association of socialism and communism.

This attitude toward socialism may not be as important in preventing the establishment of socialized medicine in this country as is the pressure upon the government of many comparatively small groups which would find it disadvantageous, for one reason or another, to convert from private medicine to socialized medicine. Among these the most prominent are the doctors, most of whom would probably find their income somewhat reduced; the drug manufacturers and salesmen, whose business would probably be taken over by the government (with, judging from current newspapers, an immediate and substantial reduction in their profits); and the insurance companies, whose programs of health insurance would, of course, be obviated. There has also been some complaint from private individuals concerning the deleterious effect upon a few prominent non-profit insurance companies, such as Blue Shield.

It is, of course, always best to act with very great care when a small proportion of the population may be inconvenienced for the benefit of the majority. Not only does such action raise the question of violation of minority rights, but it also may lead to undesirable reforms whose main appeal to the government is that they are (at the time) pleasing to the people. Nevertheless, although social-

ized medicine would obviously be detrimental to the groups enumerated above, its advantages seem to me to very substantially outweigh its disadvantages. Although the work of Blue Shield, for instance, would be defunct, its effects would be replaced by the federal program.

Our government has been moving in the direction of socialism for many years, with social security and federal subsidies to small segments of the population (notably the farmers). Socialism is undesirable in that it tends to negate the capitalistic doctrine that an individual's profit should stem from his own effort, but it is rapidly becoming more prominent in our way of life. It seems likely to me that another decade of successfully socialized medicine in Great Britain will, almost inevitably, lead to its ultimate adoption in this country.

The Cult of the "Pleasing Personality"

MARY DWYER

Rhetoric 102, Theme 3

THERE HAVE DEVELOPED IN THIS COUNTRY, COINCIDENT with advances in psychology, a number of new ideologies which purport to contain formulas for the solution of each man's personal and social problems. Foremost among these is the cult of the "pleasing personality." The founders of the sect seem to be convinced that conformity is essential to individual happiness. The doctrine which they have thrust upon the public by means of social pressure and propaganda has at its core one dominant purpose: the development of "pleasing personality" *en masse*. Observation of the typical American teenager supplies a graphic image of the progress this cult has made within our society.

The average adolescent develops more rapidly physically than mentally. He arises one morning, gazes at himself in the mirror, and finds it hard to believe that the image with which he is confronted is his own. Physical age hurls him abruptly into an adult world which bewilders him. He inevitably seeks authority to aid him in adjusting to the abrupt metamorphosis. Authority, which may be found in innumerable books and pamphlets, advises him to develop a "pleasing personality" as soon as possible. This counsel is based on the premise that he must circulate in the adult world, impersonating a mature being until he becomes one.

These "prayerbooks" containing the key to social salvation usually devote an entire chapter to listing, in no apparent order, the steps by which the young person can achieve a "pleasing personality" and thus secure admiration and social acceptability. He must always be pleasant and courteous to others, be genuinely interested in others, and be able to distribute sincere compliments

generously. Unfortunately these maxims are not so easily applied as superficial examination would indicate.

The major disadvantages inherent in these three precepts do not become apparent until the adolescent attempts to reconcile them with real circumstance. At the point of actual application the inflexibility of these guides to social acceptability makes them at the very least impractical, and often so inappropriate as to precipitate unbearable strain upon the individual. For example, in endeavoring to be pleasant and courteous at all times the adolescent may be compelled to suppress completely his personal emotions and instincts. Deliberate exclusion of normal emotions and instinctive reactions deprives him of spontaneity, and his personality becomes simply a well-adjusted machine which efficiently issues pleasant comments, proper responses, and conformist behavior as the occasion demands.

In the same manner the impetuous teenager often expands his genuine interest in others to an unwholesome extent. Genuine interest in others is time-consuming and leaves little opportunity for him to know himself. Generously scattering his interests about, he extends his horizons to include diverse groups composed of innumerable members. He becomes so immersed in the quantity of individuals contacted that he exhibits small regard for the quality of the personalities he is embracing, devoting himself to singularly detrimental relationships. His personal interests, essential to the natural development of his personality, are subordinated to the demands of the masses. Public opinion, as represented by the concepts of the vast numbers of persons in whom he is "interested," is the basic force which molds his character.

The third commandment is no less destructive to the individual than stoic courtesy or perennial gregariousness. Although distributing compliments may be merely a social skill to be developed by persistent practice, every adolescent will encounter persons in whom there is nothing he can sincerely compliment. There are two obvious solutions to this relatively frequent dilemma. He may either refrain from audible praise entirely or give voice to insincerity. The average teenager, anxious to subscribe to the socially approved doctrine, employs the latter hypocrisy in order to present a "pleasing personality." Unfortunately, the personality evolved, although pleasant because it compliments human vanity, is often somewhat shallow.

Thus the individual emerges from the protective custody of childhood. Modern society, which demands conformity from its members, appoints the cult of the "pleasing personality" as disciplinarian. This sect, in turn, dictates an established pattern of social development. The insecure adolescent, accustomed to accepting authority without question, builds his personality on these foundations. The edifice erected may soon be condemned for its inflexible, artificial appearance, but its foundations remain firmly entrenched in the social terrain.

Why Should Americans Speak Foreign Languages?

MICHAEL SHEAHAN

Rhetoric 102, Theme 4

WHEN I WAS LIVING IN EUROPE, I BECAME DISGRUNTLED by the number of times I was asked if I was able to speak a language other than English. Perhaps my answer should have been an apologetic one; however, I had the tendency to become disgusted and sometimes angry. Why should Americans speak any other language? I don't think we need to.

For the past hundred years English speaking countries have been the leaders of the world in education, manufacturing, transportation, medical research, and standard of living. In two world wars America has been victorious. We, as Americans, were the leaders of our allies and the conquerors of our enemies. We were, and believe we still are, the strongest war machine the world has ever known. Respect and fear is shown America by all nations. Yet, foreigners expect us to speak their languages.

The United States is sufficiently isolated geographically that no other language than English is necessary. Canada, to our north, is a bilingual country. In Mexico, to our south, Spanish is spoken; however, Mexico is an inferior country in relation to the United States. Many of its people are illiterate. Too, we are a stronger nation and more advanced economically. Just as a general doesn't report to a private, so the stronger nation does not submit to a weaker one's wishes. If its people wish to communicate with ours, let them converse with us in our own language.

There has been talk in recent years of a universal language. This to me seems an excellent idea. This universal language would, of course, be English. I don't believe that anyone can, without being biased, disagree with my choice of English as this universal language. It has been nature's law since the beginning of time that the fit shall survive and the weak shall perish. In this case the weak will not perish but will simply recognize nature's law and apply it. These weaker countries will learn English because it is the language of the most advanced and fit people in the world.

The European countries have already seen the possibility of English becoming a universal language and have prepared for the change. English is a required subject in most of the elementary and secondary schools there. I commend these countries for their intelligence and foresight.

It has been stated that Americans are too lazy to learn foreign languages. This is a very serious misconception. America enjoys the highest standard of living in the world; this state did not come about through laziness. America

has successfully defended herself in two world wars; this does not indicate laziness. The American people refuse to learn foreign languages; this is not laziness. We merely recognize nature's law: the weak must give in to the strong.

The weaker countries must learn our language to communicate with us. We are economically more advanced, our standard of living is superior, we have a high degree of literacy, we were victorious in two world wars, we are not lazy. These facts prove we are a strong country. Therefore, weaker countries must give in to our wishes and learn our language.

The Typical Engineer

HOWARD SCHACHTER

Rhetoric 102, Theme 4

HAVE YOU EVER WALKED ALONG CAMPUS AND BEEN RUN down by a fellow riding a bicycle and carrying a little green tool box? If you have ever realized this experience, and most of us have, you now know that you have encountered a student of the College of Engineering.

Generally speaking, you can spot an engineer a mile away. He has four major trademarks which are readily apparent. The first of the major points was mentioned before: the bicycle. A bicycle is a necessity for engineers. In fact, a bike is a prerequisite for entrance into the college. Of course, other students also *ride* bicycles, but the engineer is a little more suave about it—he aims!

The second major feature of the engineer is his little green tackle box. Many of you must wonder what is inside this kit. The most common supposition is that it contains pencils, erasers, compasses, triangles, etc. Well, this premise is all wrong. Instead, these boxes are used to carry address books to jot down girls' phone numbers, the latest sex magazines, binoculars to look into the windows at L.A.R., and alarm clocks to wake the student in class before the bell rings.

Of course, we've all seen those long things that are called "T-squares." The engineers claim that they use them to draw straight lines. I know for a fact that the only lines that engineers are interested in are curves. "T-squares" are also very handy for use in sword fights in the dorms at night.

Last but not least, our typical engineering student always carries a long case which hangs from his belt. This case was originally intended to carry a slide rule. Now it is equipped with a water gun. After last spring's episode with water fights, the engineer's motto is "Be prepared."

So now when you are walking along the Broadwalk and narrowly miss being hit by a bike, take heed; the rider is probably one of the mystic breed, an engineer—and the next time he might not miss.

Ha .. Ha .. Ha .. ??

MARY JANE BURNHAM

Rhetoric 102, Theme 2

"YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME . . . A SELF-MADE MESS." "CONgratulations . . . for meritorious service while going around in circles!" "Frankly . . . I just don't give a damn!" These words have come directly from contemporary greeting cards which, with their unusual humor, have been growing in popularity for the past three years. There must be a psychological reason why people enjoy sending and receiving these often crude, cutting, and satirical cards. What it is, I can only guess. I am sure, however, that there must be some psychologists on the card manufacturers' payrolls who know what it is, because a handsome profit is being made from these twenty-five cent cards.

I, myself, like contemporary cards and so does almost everyone I know. The question is, why? The answer most people give when asked why they like them is, "I don't know, but I think they are funny." Then one asks, "What type of humor is it that they express?" Now they become a little more hesitant. "It is hard to describe," they say. It is dry, cutting, and oftentimes critical, biting, sarcastic, and even sadistic. These seem to be unusual words to associate with a type of humor, and yet people say that the cards are funny.

Contemporary cards use many undesirable topics as hidden themes. Stealing, drinking, indolence, and vulgar language are some of the more popular topics, as indicated by the following examples: "Got you a sports car for your birthday . . . but the sport made me give it back." "I concentrated for *days* about buying you a really nice gift!!! . . . but when I sobered up . . . I was broke!" "Get off your can . . . and write." These cards are often satirizing modern (as the word contemporary indicates) society, and the neurotic-looking people depicted on the cards represent the discontented and dissatisfied human beings of our time. A superficial reason then for their popularity is that they enable people to laugh at themselves.

Underneath, however, they exemplify a disturbing trend in modern thought. It seems that people are afraid to show any emotion; they seem to feel that any show of sentimentality is a sign of weakness. They like to think of themselves as being independent of others, and they strive to establish an impersonal and cold relationship with those around them. Sentimentality is old-fashioned and so are "hearts and flowers" valentines and wedding and baby congratulatory messages. Another reason for buying contemporary cards is that they go along with this modern trend in hiding one's inner emotions and sentimental feelings. "I don't want you for my valentine just because you're a woman . . . but it sure helps" and "Cheer up . . . some married people do manage to lead happy lives" are two examples of the way people ridicule love.

Modern living causes many unconscious frustrations. Social pressures, world problems, the emphasis on conformity, and the unreliability of the future are constantly pressing on one's mind. People have inner feelings of jealousy because they have no faith in themselves; they are sarcastic because they are afraid to express their true feelings; they feel sadistic because they want to fight back at something; they use profanity to defy social decorum. When a person buys a card such as, "I was nothing till I met you . . . now we're a team," "Speaking as an outsider . . . what do you think of the human race?" or "So you were born? . . . that was your first mistake," he is relieving himself of these socially unacceptable emotions in a supposedly harmless and socially acceptable way. This is the third and most important reason for the popularity of contemporary cards. One therefore does not usually intend the literal meaning of a contemporary card when he sends it to a friend, for the actual sending of the card is only of secondary importance. The primary purpose of the contemporary card is to satisfy the hidden needs of the buyer. This is the way it was planned, because the profits come only from the buyer.

It has been well established that these cards are popular, especially with youth. New ideas and trends usually start with the younger generation. And these cards are something relatively new in the greeting card business. They have a revolutionary new size; they are printed either in black and white or very bright, gaudy colors. The contemporary mode of expression is definitely new. No one seems to question the reason for their popularity, or even his own reason for liking them. People just buy them, send them, and tack them on their bulletin boards because they "like them."

NANCY C. FRY

Rhetoric 102

As we ask ourselves where our economy is taking us under the pressures of consumerism, we have to confess that we don't really know. It is not a question that we frequently consider; usually we wonder about the size of our next raise or what new appliance to buy for our homes. Of course, as we buy a new car before the old one is worn out or an expensive home because of social pressures, we may vaguely realize that we are becoming entangled in a web that is partially spun by the producer and advertiser. Our production has reached a point at which it must continue spiralling upward or else collapse. Our economy, at the present, cannot be a stable one. Each year we must continue to strive for new, bigger production goals, until this increase becomes an end in itself. We cannot, however, exactly pinpoint why we feel forced to do this. We may reason that with increased production will come increased prosperity, and with increased prosperity will come increased happiness. As we look back, however, we can see that instead of becoming happier as we have become more prosperous, we have become more tense and unhappy. Our accumulation of wealth never satisfies us. Our economy is leading us to continue consuming more and wanting more.

Rhet as Writ

You may think that your instructor is such a nice guy, but after you have flunked your fifth theme you begin to realize that the smile he has plastered on his face is one of sarcasium and content for the lowly freshman.

* * * * *

Huckleberry gains maturity and knowledge as the novel transgresses.

* * * * *

Foreign food, the customary food of many foreign countries, is sold in many restaurants throughout America.

* * * * *

Today we overate *Huckleberry Finn*.

* * * * *

Poe, the man, was a victim of dopes.

* * * * *

The part describing the scalping of the victims by the Indians during battle is one of the most hair-raising of the many chapters in the book.

* * * * *

She (Bessie, in *The Light that Failed*) is a dirty slum from the streets, whom Dick makes his last master piece of.

* * * * *

The good base it colors are black, blue, glad, and sometimes blown.

* * * * *

One girl attempted to marry a young, French, navel officer but as soon as the tribe learned of this they cut her throat.

* * * * *

A successful football team is built around many things. One of the most important essentials is a strong mutual feeling between the coach and his men. That is to say, the players must have respect for their coach and he in turn must be respected by them.

* * * * *

Robeson should have stuck to singing and left his mouth shut.

* * * * *

An infinitive is *to* plus a *verb*. Example: He *to* was a great fighter.

* * * * *

It is a story of a man set apart from his race by sensitivity and intellect. At the age of six he tried to burn his grandmother's house.

The Contributors

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Chester Laskowski—J. Sterling Morton, Cicero

George M. Highsmith—Olney

Kathleen E. Osborne—Naperville

Donald Lee Fox—Bicknell, Indiana

Howard Siegel—Senn, Chicago

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David Josef Norton—University High, Urbana

Mary Dwyer—Pecatonica

Michael Sheahan—Arnold High, New York City

Howard Schachter—Lakeview, Chicago

Mary Jane Burnham—Edwardsville

AWARDS

The following are the winners of the prizes for the best themes in the March issue of the *Caldron*.

- First: *Rebecca Huss*, "On Limits to Liberty"
- Second: *Harvey Pastko*, "Heat"
- Third: *Donald Lee Fox*, "The Stair"
- Fourth: *Dianna Staffin*, "The Most Significant Development in My Educational Career"
- Fifth: *Anonymous*, "Every Day"

PRIZES

The editors are pleased to announce that this year prizes will be given for the five best themes in each issue of the *Caldron*. The winners will be selected by the votes of the members of the freshman rhetoric staff.

The schedule of prizes is as follows:

- FIRST: Fifteen dollars and five dollars worth of books.
- SECOND: Ten dollars and five dollars worth of books.
- THIRD: Five dollars and five dollars worth of books.
- FOURTH: Five dollars worth of books.
- FIFTH: Five dollars worth of books.



We wish to thank the following bookstores for
their generosity in providing prizes:

CAMPUS BOOK STORE

FOLLETT'S COLLEGE BOOK STORE

ILLINI UNION BOOK STORE

U. OF I. SUPPLY STORE (THE "CO-OP")

